

Impossible to predict: Who will win the ADAC GT Masters season opener?

- Start of season this weekend in Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
- Race action with 31 sports cars from eight manufacturers and 19 teams
- Premiere for new ADAC GT4 Germany under banner of ADAC GT Masters

Munich: The cards in the ADAC GT Masters are being shuffled afresh as the search for the 2019 champion gets under way after the most exciting year ever in series history. This weekend's season opener at Oschersleben (26th - 28th April) will soon show who has made the most of the winter break and who can get the new season off to a flying start. There are plenty of contenders in the frame for victory, as 19 teams with supercars from Aston Martin, Audi, BMW, Corvette, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Mercedes AMG and Porsche will challenge for the win in the first two opening rounds of the season. SPORT1 will broadcast both races live and in full on Saturday and Sunday, starting at 1:00 pm. They can also be watched online as livestream at sport1.de, adac.de/motorsport and youtube.com/adac.

Key facts, Motorsport Arena Oschersleben, Oschersleben, Races 1 and 2 of 14

Track length: 3.66 km

Layout: 14 turns (seven right-hand, seven left-handers), racing in a clockwise direction

Winners 2018, Race 1: Max Hofer/Philip Ellis (Phoenix Racing, Audi R8 LMS)

Winners 2018, Race 2: Mirko Bortolotti/Andrea Caldarelli (Orange1 by GRT Grasser, Lamborghini Huracán GT3)

TV coverage of ADAC GT Masters from Oschersleben: SPORT1 will broadcast both races live on Saturday and Sunday. See attachment for details of programme times

Pre-season testing would suggest that the ADAC GT Masters will have a highly competitive field once again this year, as four of the eight brands competing – Audi, Porsche, Corvette and Ferrari – achieved at least one fastest time in the six test sessions. A quick look at the list of winners at the track near Magdeburg shows just how difficult it is to forecast who will triumph in the season opener, since cars from seven different manufacturers have won the past eight races held there. The success of newcomers to the series at Oschersleben also demonstrates the unpredictable nature of the opener. Luca Ludwig secured a double victory there in 2009. Kelvin van der Linde became the youngest driver to win a race in the Super Sports Cars League in 2014, and three rookies were among the four winners last year. "Oschersleben is a challenging circuit that is a lot of fun," says Audi driver Max Hofer (19, A, Montplast by Land-Motorsport), who won last year's race on Saturday with Philip Ellis (26, GB); Max Hofer is now the new team-mate of former champion Christopher Mies (29, DEU). "Oschersleben is one of my favourite tracks, because the driver can still make a difference. That the track there often produces surprises may also be due to the fact that not all drivers are on top form in the first race of the season after the long winter break. That can be a disadvantage, especially in qualifying. Since overtaking is not easy at Oschersleben, it's extremely important to secure a good position on the grid."

Defending champion, the Bavarian, Robert Renauer is confident about the season opener. He has a new team-mate, Porsche Carrera Cup champion Thomas Preining (20, A), who had a promising showing in pre-season testing, posting a best time in the new Porsche 911 GT3 R. "We're really looking forward to the season and to the new car in particular," said Renauer. "We're very pleased, as we've been able to put together a good package for our mission to defend the title. Making any

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predictions is difficult, as the field of entrants is again of a very high calibre. Our goal, of course, is to fight for victories. Our Porsche has always done well at Oschersleben, so we expect to be in with a good chance.”

Mercedes-AMG driver Maximilian Götz (33, DEU, Mann-Filter Team HTP) is also very keen. He was a title contender up until the 2018 season finale title but only finished fourth overall after two collisions. He hopes to win his second title since 2012 this year. “I’ve got close to pulling it off several times since 2012 but was never able to do quite enough in the end. I now intend to attack again. We are well prepared for the season and will be a force to be reckoned with once more,” says Götz, who will be sharing a Mercedes-AMG GT3 with Indy Dontje (26, NL) for the first time. “We’re not the favourites in the season opener but still hope to finish in the Top Five. We saw from testing that we should be good on long runs.” The focus of interest at Oschersleben will be on team-mate Fabian Vettel. He is the younger brother of four-time Formula 1 world champion Sebastian Vettel and will be making his Super Sports Car League debut in the opening round.

Interest in the first outing for the two Aston Martin Vantage GT3s, with which the British brand is returning to the ADAC GT Masters, will also be huge at Oschersleben. Aston Martin works driver Maxime Martin (33, B) feels quite upbeat: “All things are possible, basically, but we must be realistic in view of the fact that the ADAC GT Masters is largely uncharted territory for us and for our Aston Martin Vantage GT3. A points-scoring finish should be a realistic goal.” The Belgian, who shares a Propeak Performance Vantage with ADAC GT Masters record-breaking race winner Daniel Keilwitz (29, DEU), has some fond memories of Oschersleben: “I contested four races at Oschersleben in 2009 and 2012 and won three of them. It’s a technical track, quite tricky, I would say. The straights are pretty short. You need a lot of downforce, and the series of triple turns are very special. I’m definitely looking forward to returning to the ADAC GT Masters. I raced the full season in 2012, but that was a long time ago. I can’t wait now to see what’s in store for us.”

Fans at Oschersleben will get the chance to see more exciting race action with the new ADAC GT4 Germany, the ADAC TCR Germany, the ADAC Formula 4 and the Special Touring Car Trophy (STT). The Pit Walk on Saturday from 10:15 to 10:45 am and Sunday, 10:45 - 11:15 am will provide an opportunity to get up close to the motor racing scene. Autograph hunters also have Saturday’s Meet the Drivers session at the ADAC Hospitality to look forward to at 4:30 pm.

ADAC GT Masters race meetings in 2019

26/04/19 – 28/04/19	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
17/05/19 – 19/05/19	Most (CZ)
07/06/19 – 09/06/19	Red Bull Ring (A)
09/08/19 – 11/08/19	Circuit Zandvoort (NL)
16/08/19 – 18/08/19	Nürburgring
13/09/19 – 15/09/19	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg
27/09/19 – 29/09/19	Sachsenring

Further information can be found at www.adac.de/gt-masters

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